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Summary of Martin Luther King's "letter From Birmingham Jail"

Martin Luther King Jr., remarks on numerous important topics which are regarded along with the racial divide and tensions which are prevalent in society during the time period in which he wrote his letter " Letter From a Birmingham Jail." Martin Luther King Jr. first addresses the members of the clergy of Birmingham and speaks, disappointingly, on their disapproval and condemnation of his demonstrations and actions, which are committed towards promoting civil rights, peace and equality in society, in Birmingham, due to concern of possible incitement of conflict in their communities and a belief that his message was unsuitable and dangerous for the time period. King, Jr. explains the necessity of him embarking on this mission due to injustice that still exists throughout other areas of their country, such as Birmingham, as all of the communities in the country are permanently interconnected and any injustice will threaten the peace and justice achieved by others. King Jr., previously, compared himself to the Apostle Paul, and other great individuals who may have been viewed as radicals in their time, as he speaks to the clergy about understanding as he journeys to another area, Atlanta to Birmingham, to spread the message of peace, and respond towards those seek aid in these matters. King justifies the use of civil disobedience, despite preferring negotiation, as the suffering and patience of others to allow it had lessened or depleted completely, and hopes individuals who, ironically, condemn this to understand that their impatience is legitimate and unavoidable. He lists and quotes many educated individuals who would agree with his position on unjust laws, segregation and the denial of human rights, and outlines the difference such as St. Augustine, and many others. He expressed that these individuals do not, seemingly, understand, know of, or care for the conditions that caused these actions nor are against them. He hopes that they would not contend with only the superficial effects that happen in a society but does not

examine or care for the underlying causes, and views unfortunate that such activities must take place in Birmingham but even more so that the city's societal structure, which consisted of and favored the white power, created this situation in the Negro community where there was no alternative. King Jr. illustrates how he and his organization orchestrated and participated in nonviolent campaigns, workshops and negotiations with Birmingham's community leaders but once such failed, they prepared for direct action. He presents his campaigns as a nonviolent and loving alternative towards the extremes of two forces for change within the black community, of blacks complacent with society status and the more violent factions such as Elijah Muhammad's Black Muslim movement. King Jr. apologizes for the length and any potential over or understatement of his letter, and desires that they will understand what is truly occurring in society, and hopes that to gain the opportunity to meet these clergy individuals as equal, fellow brothers in Christ and American citizens not social rival groups.

University Of Pennsylvania, African Studies Center - Articles Website . "Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]." *AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER - UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA.edu*, https://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html. Accessed 3 February 2020.